

Knowledge in Relationships

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (I Peter 3.7)

I have heard more times than I care to, from men, that they simply cannot understand women. If that is true, then we must discount this command given by Peter under the inspiration of God’s Spirit to “dwell with them according to knowledge.” This he spoke referring to husbands and how they should live with their wives.

Any good, working relationship must be built upon knowledge. The necessary knowledge here requires a learning process: an on-going process of learning and applying truths in a way that brings about the best results. This is the true understanding of wisdom.

The word “knowledge,” *gnosin*, is a noun that expects someone to investigate in order to come to a proper conclusion. It offers the concept of continual learning. (*II Timothy 2.15*)

On the day of our wedding, my wife (to be) and I became aware of uncomplimentary conversations being held about our possibility of making it as a married couple. We were from different backgrounds with different tastes and different likes and dislikes. Still in our teens, we understood that the statistics were against us. Some suggested we would last no longer than six months. That was 39 years ago.

One thing the rumor-mongers did not take into consideration was our resolve. We determined that we would work through problems and that the word “divorce” would never be a part of our vocabulary. We further determined that we would continue to put our Savior first in our relationship. Whenever a problem arose, we looked first to Christ to learn from Him the reason for the situation.

Over the years, we have tried to apply these principles to every relationship. Having dealt with deacons, church members, coaches, teachers, and a myriad of other personalities, this principle always applies. If we can get past the exterior and see the heart - learning motives and understanding what makes a person “tick” goes a long way in developing those relationships.

Sometime ago, I worked the bases on a 4A high school softball game. From a position behind shortstop, I made a call at first that seemed rather obvious - the runner was out. From my peripheral vision, I saw the head coach step from his dugout to head my direction. I took a deep breath to calm myself before the

encounter. His face showed intensity - I braced myself for the conflict. As he moved into my "personal zone," he spoke with a quiet voice, "You were in good position to make that call."

I said, "Yes, sir."

"She was out by almost a step wasn't she?"

"Yes, sir."

(He then kicked a little dirt.) "I just came out here to let my girls know I was supporting them. Good call." (He kicked a little more dirt as he walked away.)

I gained much respect for the man that day. He was showing support for his girls - not attacking me.

On another occasion, I was working a rather big 4A football game that was not going as was expected. The home team coach became irate - he wanted a coach-referee conference. He called his timeout and began yelling before I had a chance to get to his sideline. With approximately 8,000 fans, his yelling could be heard across the field by my wife and daughter who were sitting in the visitors bleachers (not letting anyone know they were related to the guy on the field). He yelled for a while as my line-judge and I listened. Soon, he calmed down and softened. I asked him if he was ok and if there was anything else I could do for him. Before the stunned expression left his face, we headed back to the field to get the game moving.

He was not angry with me - he was angry because his team was not playing up to their potential. He had his say - his team received their motivation - they won the game.

So often, we react to the outward appearance of things - the rants and the raves - the whining and complaining - the external and superficial - when we should be learning why they respond as they do.

A parent who disciplines every child in the exact same manner may seem fair, but they fail to learn why their children do not respond in similar fashion to each other. Each child is an individual. A husband who takes the advice from a friend who offers standard methods of "handling" his wife, learns little and gains no wisdom. A wife is a unique creation, too. Teachers who believe students are made from a common mold, miss the wonderful uniqueness of God's creation.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must commit ourselves to learning. As we learn to appreciate the inner person, we learn to love as Jesus loves.

Rev John H. Hill